

The present Preliminary Amendment is submitted to correct for minor informalities in the specification. The changes made to the specification are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

The present application is believed to be in condition for a full and thorough examination on the merits. An early and favorable consideration of the present application is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 13, paragraph beginning at line 11 to line 21, delete in its entirety and insert therefor:

As illustrated in Fig. 11, when one or more information related to the hardware of the image forming apparatus are designated and input, and a prescribed key is operated (e.g. an operation start key is turned ON) to start downloading of the firmware (step S2), the CPU of the central system 1 may retrieve appropriate information from the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b of Fig. 5. Each or all of hardware units can be designated and set as retrieval conditions and prescribed information that conforms to the retrieval conditions can be picked up. Otherwise, such retrieval conditions can be more or less than a prescribed designation version number. For example, one or more prescribed model/machine numbers of the applicable image forming apparatuses of firmware update objectives may then be picked up from the appropriate information from the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b (step S3), and an image forming apparatus pick up list may automatically be generated (step S4).

Page 21, paragraph beginning at line 11 to line 19, delete in its entirety and insert therefor:

The CPU of the central system 1 may retrieve appropriate information from an image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b of Fig. 5 when prescribed hardware related

information of the image forming apparatus of firmware update objective is designated and input, and a key operation for starting download of firmware is performed. Then, one or more model/machine numbers of one or more applicable image forming apparatuses of the firmware update objectives may be picked up from the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b, and an image forming apparatus pickup list may automatically be generated. After that, it may be determined if the supervisory information including hardware of one or more image forming apparatuses having these model/machine numbers conform to updated firmware to be downloaded.

Page 21, paragraph beginning at line 20 to line 25, delete in its entirety and insert therefor:

Specifically, as illustrated in Fig. 18, if one or more image forming apparatuses whose control baseboard C1, ROMs C11 and C12, optical unit control unit D1, high voltage power supply unit D2, motor control unit D3, and sorter control unit D4 have respective version numbers [1.00], [1.22], [1.00], [1.20], [1.00], [1.10], and [1.00] is the firmware update objective, appropriate information from the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b may be retrieved by each of the version numbers as a keyword.

Page 21, paragraph beginning at line 26 to page 22, line 7, delete in its entirety and insert therefor:

In this example, since one of the model/machine numbers [X X Y 1] that conforms to the version numbers exists in the supervisory information of the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b, it is determined from the result of the conformity check that the supervisory information may conform to the updated firmware (step S55). Thus, conformity of the supervisory information of the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b to updated firmware may be checked (step S56). If it is determined that the supervisory

information does not conform to the updated firmware (No in step S56), the updated firmware may be reconstructed so as to conform to the supervisory data of the image forming apparatus supervisory DB 59b (step S57). If it is determined that the supervisory information conforms to the updated firmware (Yes in step S56), or the updated firmware is reconstructed so as to conform to supervisory data (after step S57), appropriate information from the user DB 59a automatically is retrieved to pick up a connection or facsimile apparatus number assigned to a communications adapter that is connected to applicable one or more image forming apparatuses using the model/machine number of the image forming apparatus pickup list as a keyword (step S58).